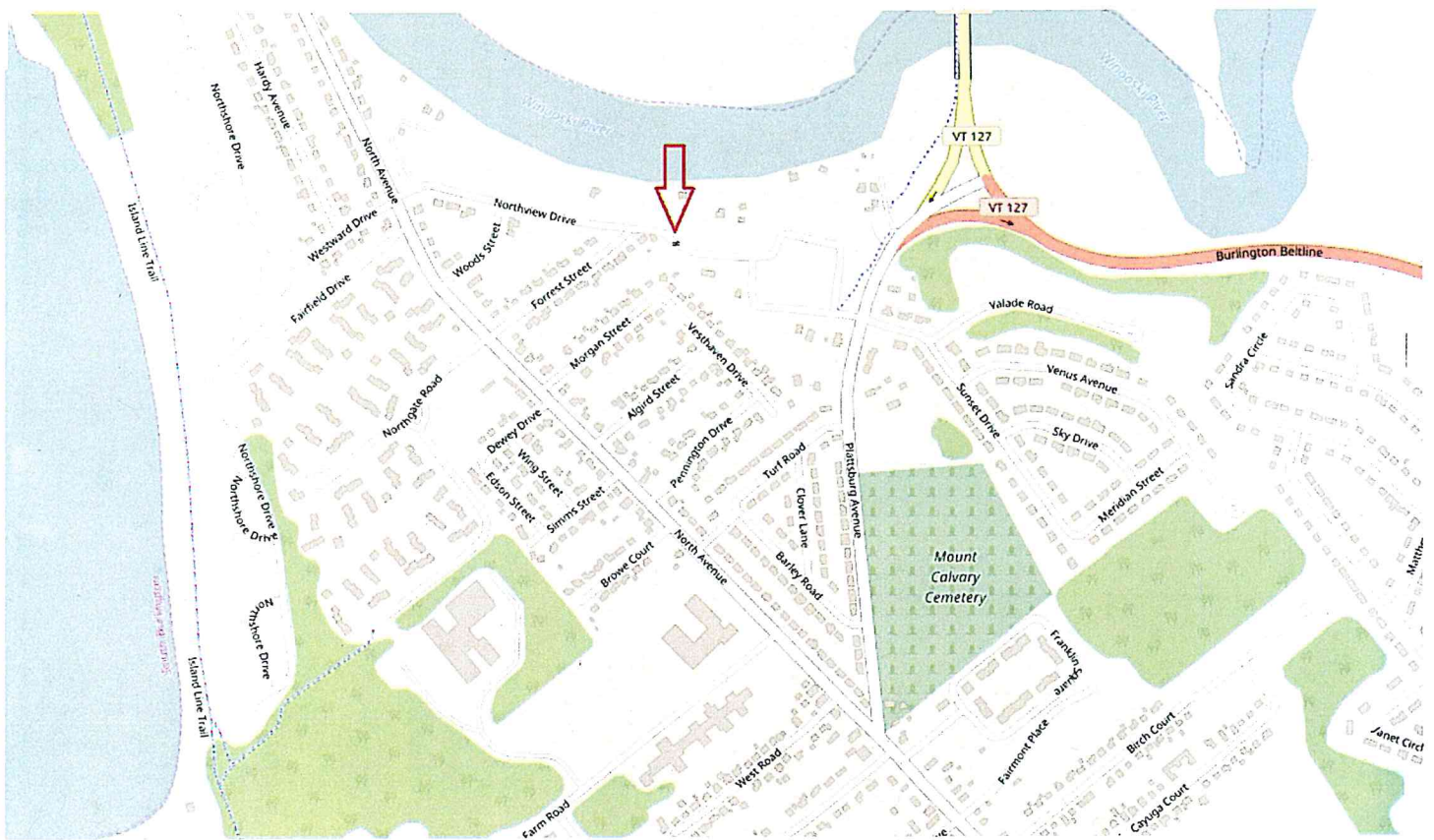# RESIDENT'S RESPONSE TO JOYCE WALSLEBEN'S PETITION TO REMOVE THE GATE AT THE END OF RIVER'S EDGE DRIVE

On April 26, 2016, Joyce Walsleben was instructed by the Mayor's office, that for the DPW to consider further assessment of opening the emergency gate at the end of River's Edge Drive, she needed collect signatures from at least 30% of the impacted households on Northview Drive, Woods Street, Riverview Drive, Forest Street, River's Edge Drive and Borestone lane. On 9/21/2016 she presented a petition to the DPW that failed to collect even 3% of signatures. 89 of the 90 households reached were strongly opposed to her petition. We ask that all consideration of Ms. Walsleben's petition be halted until the mayor's requirements are satisfied.

The residents of the 6 neighborhoods are not opposed to opening the emergency access gate for a real emergency. The City Fire Marshall has verified the gate satisfies requirements for emergency access and the gate can be easily opened by emergency responders.

River's Edge Drive is a street inside a resident-owned neighborhood. Ms. Walsleben's claim that River's Edge Drive has been maintained at taxpayer expense is misleading. The street has received only minimal city services (a few cold-patches) since its construction by a private contractor. Since 2001, the River's Edge Condo Association (RECA) has spent over $195,000 servicing River's Edge Drive and Borestone Lane. This includes road maintenance in the form of paving, repairs and marking. Residents also pay for private snow removal.

River's Edge Drive and Northview Drive are local access roads not built for through traffic. Taxpayer expense to upgrade roadbeds, install curbs, fix drainage issues, install signage and traffic calming measures would be massive, with negligible benefits to all residents of the New North End.

River's Edge Drive and Northview Drive are located in a river corridor and could require even further expenditures to satisfy riparian development concerns.
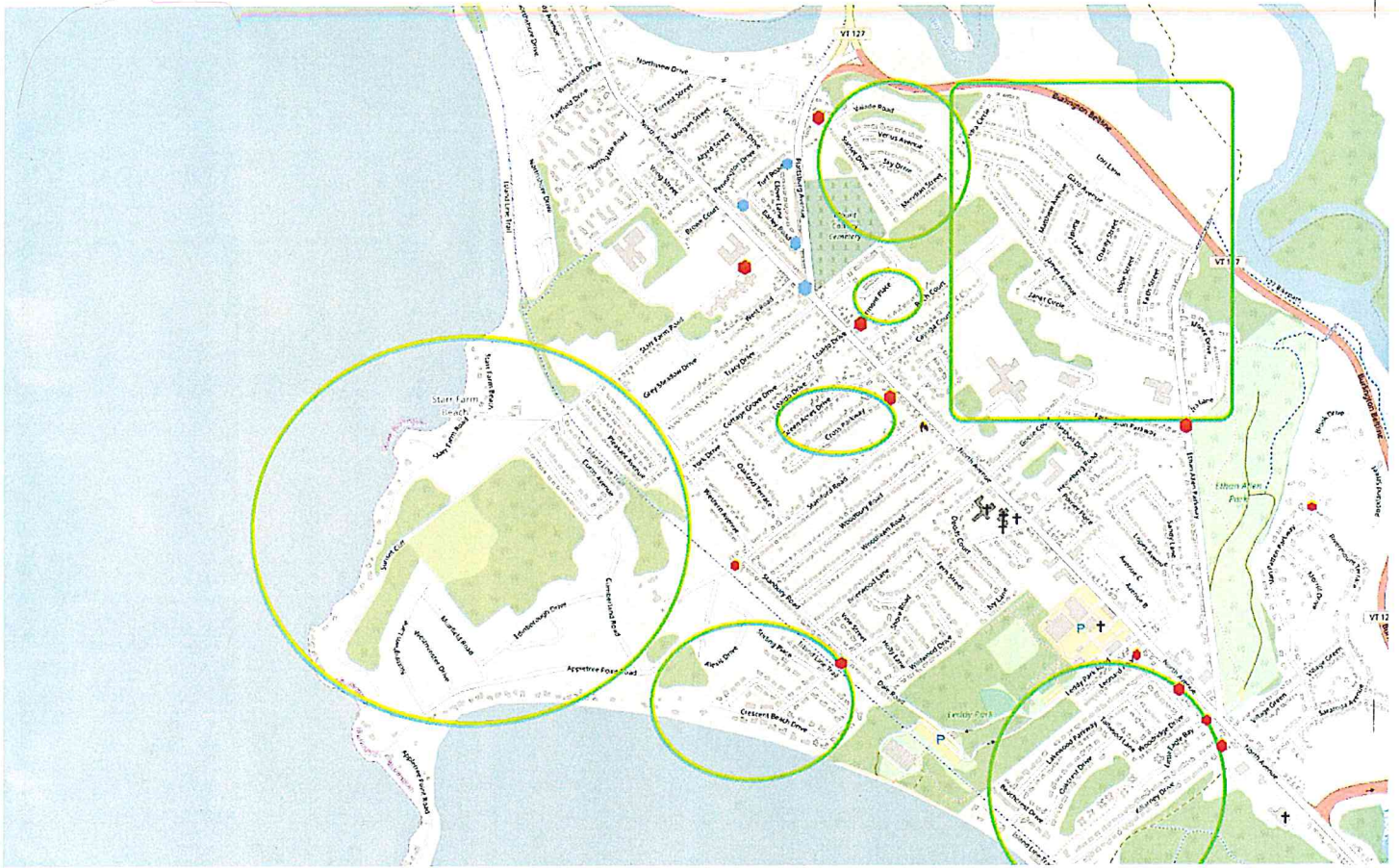
River's Edge Drive and Northview Drive roadways are the only bikeway connector from North Avenue to Plattsburgh Avenue and the bike route into Colchester. RECA paid for the bike lane marking.

There are already several existing planned access points for households at the North end of North Avenue, including multiple access points to Plattsburg Avenue.

The end of North Avenue already has more access points to North Avenue than other neighborhoods in the North End: Starr Farm Road, Sunset/Valade Park and Ethan Allen parkway east of Farrington (goes right by Smith Elementary school).

Contemporary city planning challenges the idea of "car first" methods to street design. Burlington is moving away from a "faster is better" approach with programs like Safe Routes to school and the Complete Streets initiative. Traffic and vehicle incidents are a fact of city life. Sending traffic down unplanned routes is not the way to combat this.

As it was presented, the petition to open the gate at the end of River's Edge Drive is dividing neighbors on the east and west sides of North Avenue. The disingenuous claims the author used to scare people into signing a petition for an unsafe shortcut from North Avenue to Plattsburgh Avenue are distasteful. How many of the signees have ever gone into the neighborhoods they are proposing to disrupt the safety of?

The residents of Northview Drive, Riverview Drive, Forest Street, Woods Street, River's Edge Drive and Borestone Lane are unanimously opposed to opening the gate. These families, many of whom are original homeowners, do not fear imagined catastrophes, terror attacks or "beach dwellers who make fires". We respect our neighbors, enjoy the peace and safety of the New North End and trust that emergency services can easily open the gate if necessary.

The author of the petition, lives in a private, no public access development is asking families to sacrifice their safety for the sake of a shortcut to the Beltline, "simply to get to work or a long awaited doctor's appointment in a timely fashion".